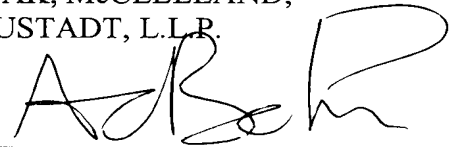


Further, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants are disbarred of their right of defense because Applicants are not aware of, and the Office Action does not indicate, the basis of the Election of Species Requirement. Further, the Office Action does not identify any mutually exclusive characteristics of the Species. Specifically, with respect to Fig. 3, it is noted that Fig. 3 is a variant of Fig. 2, and there is no particular reason why Fig. 3 is included in Species II with Figs. 7 and 8.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the Election of Species Requirement on the grounds that a search and examination of the entire application would not place a serious burden on the Examiner, whereas it would be a serious burden on Applicants to prosecute and maintain separate applications. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the requirement to elect a single species be withdrawn, and that a full examination on the merits of Claims 17-31, 33-36, and 38 be conducted.

Respectfully submitted,

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